

FUN AMPHIBIAN FACTS – compiled by Emily Abernethy

- Amphibians can live both in land as well as in water. Their name comes from a Greek word 'amphibios' which means 'both lives'. Frogs, salamanders and toads are all amphibians.
- The world's largest frog is the Goliath Frog, which lives in western Africa! It can grow up to 33 cm's & can weigh 33 kg!
- The world's smallest frog named 'Little Grass Frog' is smaller than the size of a housefly!
 - <http://www.makemegenius.com/cool-facts/amphibians-reptiles-100-interesting-facts->
- You must have heard about 'raining frogs'. Actually these events happen for real. It happens when windstorms pass over ponds full of frogs. These storms pick them up & throw them somewhere else.
 - <http://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/climate-weather/storms/rain-frog.htm>
- An impressive fact about salamanders concerns their life spans. Although one would not expect salamanders to survive for a long period of time, many salamanders can live for up to ten years. Perhaps the longest life span of any salamander is that of the hellbender, which can live for anywhere between 25-30 years. With characteristics such as those described above, it is no wonder that in some forest habitats salamanders make up the largest constituent of the biomass.
 - http://www.herpsfnc.org/Myths/Herp_Facts.html
- A little known fact about salamanders is that members belonging to the family Plethodontidae, which is the largest family of salamanders, are completely lungless. This is an amazing trait considering the fact that Plethodontid salamanders are almost wholly terrestrial. Instead of using lungs for gas exchange, Plethodontid salamanders respire across their skin. In order for this strategy to be successful, these salamanders must remain in moist and humid microhabitats.
 - http://www.herpsfnc.org/Myths/Herp_Facts.html
- One may wonder what frogs and toads do when the environmental temperature approaches freezing. The answer for some amphibians involves burrowing deep into the ground and hibernating. Hibernating animals are protected from low temperatures, but they are unable to resume activity until warmer weather arrives. Some toads employ similar strategies to escape the heat. For instance, spadefoot toads may hibernate during the summer (aestivation) or until it rains. Cases have been documented in which spadefoot toads have remained in estivation for several years and finally emerged to breed upon heavy rainfall.
 - http://www.herpsfnc.org/Myths/Herp_Facts.html
- Frogs (along with other amphibians and reptiles) will also hibernate during the winter. Some frogs even possess antifreeze agents which impart freezing resistance. These agents prevent water from crystallizing in the cells, which would eventually cause death.
 - http://www.herpsfnc.org/Myths/Herp_Facts.html
- Frogs can breathe not only with their lungs, but also through their skin. A frog's skin is thin and contains many mucous glands that keep it moist. Oxygen can be absorbed through this thin, damp skin.
 - <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/ReptilesAmphibians/Facts/>

Some NC specific fun facts:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Fun Fact	Link
<i>Acris crepitans crepitans</i>	Eastern (Northern) Cricket Frog	The genus name Acris means "call like an insect" which according to Tom Johnson's book <u>The Amphibians and Reptiles of Missouri</u> is a metallic "gick, gick, gick," somewhat like the sound of small pebbles being struck rapidly together. Many scientific names of frogs describe the sound of their calls during breeding season. The species name crepitans means "clattering" and also refers to the call.	
<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>	Spotted Salamander	A solar salamander - Photosynthetic algae have been found inside the cells of a vertebrate for the first time. "...He noticed that their bright green colour comes from within the embryos themselves, as well as from the jelly capsule that encases them. This viridescence is caused by the single-celled alga <i>Oophila amblystomatis</i> . This has long been understood to enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the spotted salamander, which lays its eggs in bodies of water. However, the symbiosis was thought to occur between the salamander embryo and algae living outside it with the embryo producing nitrogen-rich waste that is useful to algae, and the algae increasing the oxygen content of the water in the immediate vicinity of the respiring embryos. ...Kerney	http://www.nature.com/news/2010/100730/full/news.2010.384.html

		<p>reported that these algae are, in fact, commonly located inside cells all over the spotted salamander's body. Moreover, there are signs that intracellular algae may be directly providing the products of photosynthesis, oxygen, and carbohydrate to the salamander cells that encapsulate them.” More in article</p>	
<i>Hyla femoralis</i>	Pine Woods Treefrog	<p>The name of the genus comes from the Greek hyla (belonging to the woods). The species name is from the Latin femoralis (pertaining to the thigh), a reference to the spotting on the inner thigh that is characteristic of this species.</p>	http://naturalhistory.uga.edu/
<i>Lithobates clamitans melanota</i>	Northern Green Frog	<p>The old name of the genus comes from the Latin rana (frog). The species name is the Latin word clamitans (loud-calling or noisy). Some people think that this frog's call sounds like a loud, loose banjo string or a rubber band snapping.</p>	http://naturalhistory.uga.edu/
<i>Lithobates sphenoccephalus utricularius</i>	Southern Leopard Frog	<p>The old name of the genus comes from the Latin rana (frog). The species name comes from the Greek words sphenos (wedge-shaped) and kephale (head), a reference to the triangular head.</p>	http://naturalhistory.uga.edu/

<i>Plethodon wehrlei</i>	Wehrle's Salamander	<p>Genus is from the Greek plethore (fullness or full of) & Greek odon (teeth) = ref. to the number of vomerine & pre-vomerine teeth</p> <p>Species is New Latin and honors Wehrle, Richard W. Wehrle, Richard White (c1853-1937) <i>Plethodon wehrlei</i> Fowler and Dunn, 1917</p> <p>"Named for Mr. R.W. Wehrle, who collected most of our examples and also presented many local collections of cold-blooded vertebrates to the [Philadelphia] Academy." 1911</p> <p>Collected the type of <i>Plethodon wehrlei</i> from Lick Hills, Indiana County, PA. 1936 Netting wrote that naming the salamander was "a tribute to the oldest and best-loved naturalist of Indiana County (PA), Mr. R.W. Wehrle...an indefatigable collector of cold-blooded vertebrates... [a jeweler and naturalist]. Since (1925) Mr. Wehrle has sent over 500 salamanders to the Carnegie Museum." Donated hundreds of specimens to the Academy of Natural Sciences and the Carnegie Museum.</p>	http://ebeltz.net/herps/etymain.html
<i>Pseudacris ocularis</i>	Little Grass Frog	<p>The Little Grass Frog is the smallest (0.67") land vertebrate in the United States.(site 1) The little grass frog ... is the smallest frog species in the country and one of the smallest vertebrates in the world. (site 2)</p>	http://greennature.com/article2433.html http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2188

<p><i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i></p>	<p>Eastern Spadefoot</p>	<p>Genus is from the Greek skaphis (shovel or spade) & Greek pous (foot) = ref. shape and adaptation of hind foot for digging. Species is New Latin and honors Holbrook, John E Holbrook, John Edwards (1794-1871) Lampropeltis getula holbrookii Stejneger, 1902; Holbrookia Girard, 1851 and Scaphiopus holbrookii (Harlan, 1835) 1796 Born in Beaufort, SC, December 31. 1815 AB, Brown University. 1818 MD, U PA. 1818-1820 Studied Medicine in London, England and Edinburgh, Scotland. 1820-1822 Studied in Paris, France at Jardin Des Plantes. 1822 Returned to US. Settled at Charleston, SC. 1824 Practiced medicine in Charleston, SC. 1824 A founder of the Medical College of SC. 1824-1854 Professor of Anatomy, Medical College of Charleston, SC. 1836-1842 "North American Herpetology" defining nearly 150 species. 1861-1865 Medical Officer, Confederate Army Board of Surgeons; Chairman, Examining Board of Surgeons, SC. 1862 Consequential to Sherman's March during Civil War, Holbrook's work was scattered. Personal papers were lost. Some books and specimens are in museums. 1863 His wife died. They had no children. Moved back to MA. 1868 Elected to National Academy of Sciences. Called the "Father of North American Herpetology."</p>	<p>http://ebeltz.net/herps/etymain.html</p>
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